ALPAGUT: THE METHODOLOGY AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF TURAN MARTIAL ARTS

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Abstract

Martial arts represent one of the most significant cultural achievements of humanity, evolving from primal survival instincts into complex systems of philosophy, ethics, and physical discipline. This research explores the historical development, ethno-cultural roots, and modern systematization of Alpagut, a martial art rooted in the ancient military traditions of Turkic peoples. By synthesizing archaeological evidence, etymological analysis, and nomadic military heritage, this work establishes Alpagut as a modern discipline that preserves ancient warrior traditions within a contemporary sports framework.

1. Introduction: The Evolution of Martial Culture

From the dawn of civilization, combat was a necessity for protection and sustenance. However, as societies evolved, these skills transformed into cultural values. While no single nation can claim the sole origin of martial arts, the historical military prowess of Turkic tribes—who established vast empires across Eurasia—necessitated a highly sophisticated system of hand-to-hand combat. Alpagut is the realization of this heritage, reconstructed for the 21st century **(Namazov, 2024)**.

2. Historical and Etymological Origins

The term **"Alpagut"** is deeply embedded in Turkic history. As documented in the *Divanu Luğat-it-Turk* (11th century) by Mahmud Kashgari, it refers to a "sacred warrior" or a hero who attacks the enemy single-handedly without fear.

- **"Alp"** signifies bravery, greatness, and a warrior of high status.
- **"Gut"** represents sacredness, blessing, and spiritual maturity. An Alpagut is not merely a fighter but a spiritually and physically matured individual dedicated to the defense of their people and values **(Kashgari, 1072; as cited in Namazov, 2024)**.

3. The "Urmu" Theory and Archaeological Evidence

This research supports the **"Urmu Theory,"** which identifies the region around Lake Urmia and the broader Near East as a primary cradle of Turkic civilization, challenging the late-migration theories **(Jalilov, 2013)**. Archaeological findings provide concrete evidence of these combat traditions:

- **Silver Vessels from Tyumen:** Artifacts dating back to the 1st millennium BC depict warriors in specific grappling and wrestling positions.
- **Golden Buckles from Ordos:** Ancient Turkic belt buckles illustrate standardized hand-to-hand combat techniques utilized during the Hunnic and Gokturk eras. These artifacts demonstrate that Turkic peoples practiced organized combat systems—precursors to Alpagut—long before the emergence of modern Eastern martial arts disciplines **(Gipchak & Asgar, 2015)**.

4. The Educational System: From Childhood to Mastery

In ancient Turkic societies, the concept of the "nation-army" meant every citizen was a potential defender. Physical education was a rigorous, lifelong process:

- **Early Training:** Training began at age three, focusing on equestrian skills and archery.
- **Stages of Victory:** As recorded in the **Book of Dede Korkut**, a warrior had to prove mastery in archery, swordsmanship, and finally, wrestling and hand-to-hand combat to earn a title and social status **(Gipchak & Asgar, 2015)**. This heritage forms the psychological and ethical basis of the modern Alpagut practitioner.

5. Modern Systematization: The Technical Disciplines

To ensure international sports standardization, Alpagut has been codified into five distinct tactical systems, each representing a different facet of Turkic combat history **(Namazov, 2024)**:

1. **Ayça System:** Focuses on full-contact strikes utilizing hand and foot techniques, excluding the head. It emphasizes technical superiority and impactful combinations.
2. **Batur System:** A mixed combat discipline that integrates striking with standing throws, takedowns, and ground fighting (grappling). Victory can be achieved via submission holds or joint locks.
3. **Jaymaz System:** A dynamic stand-up fighting system where throws and grappling are prohibited. Athletes must maintain balance and agility to defeat opponents within designated circles.
4. **Gurshag System:** Based on the ancient traditional belt-wrestling heritage. Striking is strictly prohibited; victory is sought through throws, technical control, and forcing the opponent out of the ring.
5. **Kachut System:** An applied combat system focusing on self-defense against traditional weapons (knives, swords) and the offensive use of these implements through choreographed and practical methods.

6. International Recognition and Governance

The World Alpagut Federation (WAF) maintains international standards of governance and is officially recognized by the following bodies:

- **ICSSPE (International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education):** Member since May 17, 2022.
- **TAFISA (The Association For International Sport for All):** Member since December 7, 2022.
- **IMGC (International Martial Arts Games Committee):** Recognized since March 10, 2023.
- **CIFP (International Fair Play Committee):** Admitted May 10, 2023.
- **ISNI (International Standard Name Identifier):** Registered as an official international organization (ISNI: 0000 0005 1161 6296).
- **ISNO & UIF:** Compliant with international network and federation standards.

Conclusion

Alpagut is more than a sport; it is a bridge between the heroic past of the Turan geography and the modern world. By academicizing these traditions through research and international standardization, we ensure the survival of an ancient cultural identity while contributing a unique, scientifically-grounded discipline to the global martial arts community.

References

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